THE

AERONAUT.

No. 130. October 23. 1817

IT is much to be lamented, that while the generality of readers run with avidity to every new work, which the prolific genius of the age may bring forth, those productions of standard merit, and approved excellence, which years not very long past produced, are neglected or forgotten. The consequence is, that the public taste becomes vitiated, the experience of past writers is of no avail, and there are but few sound thinkers, or judicious reasoners.

We have already had occasion, in a former number, to notice the writers of an earlier period of English history. Amid the "dark and troublous" times of the seventeenth century, were many, in whose works, although in some respects heavy & tedious, much is to be found of the most excellent matter, and the most judicious observation. From these we would particularly ~~select~~ select the great and learned Bishop HALL, whose life and whose writings at once evince the deepest piety, the most ardent attachment to the service of his God, combined with a zeal, and a fervor, which would have done honor to any man. He thought, to use his own expression, that "it were too great a shame for a Philosopher, a Christian, a Divine, and a Bishop, to have his thoughts grovelling here on earth." (1) His devotions were exalted as his mind; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding

(1) See his "letter from the Tower."—

seemed indeed to have been shed down in abundance upon his heart.

But we might spend pages after pages, and still leave his merits and his virtues untold. They are we trust, enshrined in a place where nothing can assail them; and but feeble would be the tribute which we could pay to his memory.

Our principal reason for mentioning this great prelate was for the sake of introducing to the acquaintance of our readers, the lucubrations of a distant friend in the country, who has amused his leisure hours during the past season in throwing into a metrical garb some of the thoughts and meditations of Bishop Hall. The employment is by no means an useless one, and we should hope, not an unprofitable one to the versifier. Most of these parts of his writings abound in beauties of no common order. How far our friend has acquitted himself with success, we do not pretend at present to determine.

They are to be considered rather as paraphrases than as close imitations; rather as extending the idea, than as conveying the precise meaning of the author, though in this last mentioned particular, they are perhaps as faithful as might be expected. —

From the
first Century of Meditations & vows.

XI.

The world, that would beset my path,
Can only yield the good it hath;
What can it give? — a blast of fame,
Deceitful mockery of a name;
False honors, fleeting as the air,
And pleasures, leading to despair;
And wealth, that beams with shadowy glow,
The lure that whelms in deepest woe; —
When all these seeming joys are past,
Where, where shall be my being cast?
Where shall the hopes of pleasure be?
Alas! their end is mockery! —
No length of days can they bestow,
No happier life for me shall flow. —
The world may vex me with its hate —
It can but make me desolate,
It can but blast me in my name,
Or pour affliction on my frame,
The darkest ills its rage can shed

Shall cease when shrin'd among the dead.
– I've known it long – too long have seen
The vainness of its empty mine;
Born for a better world I live
Too high such pleasures to receive,
Too much enraptur'd with the sky
To fear its threats of misery! –

XXI.

The Earth, for transient mortals made,
And by the foes of God possest,
So many pleasures do pervade
Upon her ever radiant breast,
That they who love it, think that heaven
Already to their souls is given.

High streaming from his path of light
The sun pursues his wonted way,
And yon blue walls of azure bright
Are joying in the glorious ray;
Unnumber'd forms below are seen,
And lovely flowers, and vallies green.

If such is Earth, O what must prove
The realm for God himself bedeckt?
Far, far this lovely earth above
It shines in brightness all uncheck'd; –
If such is Heaven, the hour I'll bless,
That wafts me to such happiness!

XXXVII.

The godly sow in tears, & reap in joy.
The seed time ever must be cold & drear;
But give me spring, with all its stormy sky,
So that my harvest may be bright & clear.

LIV.

Oh may it not be mine to share
The aged years no fruit that bear!
But, since, if Spring's fair blossoms fail
No hopes of Autumn shall avail,
The wither'd tree — the leafless bough
Emblems that all is hopeless now —
May youth for me her blossoms shed,
And science crown my rising head,
And sober wisdom now prepare
To shun the sadness of despair!

LXXVI

My God is ever present, ever near;
I see him not, yet is he always here;
I feel him not, yet he within me lives;
Yea — every moment aid from him receives:
Live I with him? — Oh that this sinful heart
Could count all time as lost, where God bears not a part! —

LXXVII.

None, like the Christian can enjoy
Pleasure's sublime reality;
He looks to heaven's expanded dome,
And cries, "Behold, behold my home!

'My Father is the God that reigns
'Upon those wide and boundless plains;
"Those glorious angels me attend,
"And safe from every ill defend!"—
The things that vex the evil heart
To him unwonted bliss impart;
As the loud thunder shakes the sky
He hears his God in majesty,
And listens to the awful sound
As deeply echoing far around.
The memory of the day of doom
To him without a pang can come;
He only sees his Saviour there,
And longs in Paradise to share.
The tyrant death he hails, as him
The heavn-appointed cherubim,
Whose single blow, a moment given,
Admits the wanderer to heaven!

XCVII.

On every cheek must burn the tear,
And every bosom throb to woe,
Nor lives the man on earth's dark sphere
That safe from sorrow's pang can go.

Then let it come — my soul shall wait
Prepared each trial to abide;
And welcome be its darkest state,
And joyous be its blackest tide; —

And when it goes, not one farewell
Shall hail the parting of the storm;
Since human reason cannot tell
How soon it may resume its form.

Century II. — XIII.

No sin is small; since sin the least can roll
The deadly surge upon the sinking soul: —
What boots it, if I founder near the shore,
Or mid the ocean's wildest, deepest roar? —

XXII.

Say, what is man, to earth's whole landscape vast
What earth to Heav'n's domain of golden tide?
What heaven to Him who formed its glorious host
Nought in itself shall ever please my view;
Lost in my God, in Him alone I'll love
Thro' vast creation's varied scenes to rove.

LXXVIII.

Wherein the God of order moves,
Confusion shrinks away,
And all of soul or nature proves
His all progressive sway.

Starts not the sun at early morn
To noon from blackest night,
But first on gales of incense borne
Dawns forth the glimmering light;

Then looks he forth from out his throne
With weak and watery beams,
Like risin amid his golden noon
His tameless glory beams. —

So, as he rolls his lofty course
The seasons mark his way,
Nor does the wintry tempest hoarse
Usurp the summer's ray;

But autumn sweeps his milder hour
O'er all that bloom below,
And soften'd by his mellowing power,
Departs the earth's red glow.

The healthful dew o'er genial fields
In colder showers descends,
And conquered nature gently yields
As winter's reign extends.

Thus, as in nature's lovely face,
Doth order move the soul,
And thus the streams of heavenly grace,
Progressive o'er it roll;

Through grace alone the heart can
share
The glory of the skies;
By culture only brought to bear
Such fruit in rich supplies! —

Cent. iii. — XXIII.

Riches may fly, and beauty fade,
And every worldly comfort perish;
And we but weep their parted shade,
And grieve for what no more may flourish.

Such is the past: — to-day's fond dream
Like them too shortly shall be over,
And pleasure's most extatic beam
Serves but some sorrow to discover.

And o'er the future's dubious hour,
What gleam we of the gloomy morrow,
Uncertain if in pleasure's power
'Twill rise, or in the grasp of sorrow?

O worse than folly then to place
Dependence on such fleeting treasures;
When heaven shall yield us happiness,
And streams of never-fading pleasures!

Holy Observ. — VIII.

Heaven seems its ample frame to wheel
And star bespangled breast,
Ever it seems along to steal —
Yet 'tis our place of rest.

We feel not earth beneath us move,
All tranquil seems & fair, —
Yet here our bosoms only prove
Trouble and wild despair.

The motion that without we see
May bear some resting place,

And riots often anarchy
Where all seem gentleness.

The smooth, deceitful heart will bear
A dreadful pany within;
And souls in grief that seem to share
Eternal rest begin!

The selection already made, might be extended, if we were not fearful of tiring the patience of our readers. It may not be unnecessary here to remark, that in the two last paraphrases more liberty has been taken with the original reflections, than in any of the others.

Deficient as was the poetry of two centuries ago in all that constitutes the charm of modern poesy, we are of opinion, that a real poetical spirit is often discoverable in the prose writings of that age. Many are the rich and valuable gems which lie hid beneath a mass of uncouth diction, and useless verbosity, which a modern master of the lyre might turn to great advantage. Quaint

as they may now seem, they contain what will not easily perish; and it would not be amiss for our modern poetasters, instead of ransacking their brains for images which they are incapable of originating, to make themselves masters of many of the writings of the period above alluded to.

E.